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ABSTRACT

This document is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 12 titles deal with a variety of topics, including the following: an examination of investors' understanding of auditing reports; the development and implementation of a communication audit related to selected systems concepts; the communication between the University of Minnesota and the 1975 Minnesota state legislature; organizational communication consulting as studied in consultant practices and prescriptions; communication distortions in a large organization; the role of personality characteristics in written business communication; a comparative analysis of selected organizational variables in a public utility company; lines of communication in the University of Kansas described by the system-semantics methodology; organizational communication to and from the office of presidents of institutions of higher education; error acceptability in written business communication as perceived by business educators and by business communicators; an experimental study to determine the effects of listening skills training on achievement and attitudes in a college business communication course; and communication and interorganizational relationships among complex organizations in social service settings. (DF)

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COMMUNICATION AND INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONS IN SOCIAL SERVICE SETTINGS

COMMUNICATION IN AUDITING: AN EXAMINATION OF INVESTORS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE AUDITOR'S REPORT

BARNETT, Andrew Horn, D.B.A.
Texas Tech University, 1976

Chairman: Dr. Dan M. Guy

The accounting professional has recognized a fundamental distinction between the investigative audit process and the communicative audit process. The auditor's report is the medium through which the auditor communicates to users the nature of his investigation and his opinion on the financial statements. The underlying premise of this study is that the accounting professional has insufficiently examined the communicative qualities of the auditor's report.

The objectives of this research were to (1) identify and examine in the context of fundamental principles of communication theory, the auditor's function as a creator and transmitter of messages via the auditor's report, (2) measure empirically investors' level of knowledge of terms and concepts used in the auditor's report, (3) determine if a relationship exists between nonprofessional investors' audit report knowledge and certain demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral attributes of such investors, and (4) reexamine the need for improvements in the current form of the auditor's report in the context of the empirical insight developed in this study and inferences drawn from the literature.

To provide empirical insight about the degree of audit report users' understanding of the standard audit report, a mail questionnaire survey was administered to Texas investors. The questionnaire obtained information about investor demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal characteristics, and measured their understanding of audit report terms and concepts. Investors were subdivided into two primary groups: nonprofessional investors, those who neither invest nor advise as a part of their employment; and, professional investors, those who do invest or advise.

Evaluation of the adequacy of investors' understanding was based upon comparison of the average test score of each investor with a predetermined criterion: to have sufficient knowledge, the investor must be able to correctly answer at least 65 per cent of the questions on the test. The average nonprofessional investor does not sufficiently understand the standard auditor's report. Nonprofessionals could correctly answer only an average of 50 per cent of the questions on the scale. Likewise, the average professional investor does not sufficiently understand the auditor's report. Professionals could correctly answer only 51 per cent of the test questions.

The analytical results obtained from the empirical study, when combined with the conceptual formulations obtained from the study of communication theory and the perspective obtained from the historical review, provide preliminary foundation for a proposed revision of the present report. The major features of the proposed report are discussed in the following paragraphs: 1. The use of frequently misunderstood technical terms without explanation is avoided. 2. The second paragraph contains a discussion of the distinction between management responsibility and auditor responsibility with respect to the financial statements. Care has been taken to avoid use of strong qualifying terms that would be tantamount to a disclaimer of responsibility of the auditor. 3. Also included in the third paragraph is a four-point elucidation of the nature of the auditor's professional standards. The first two points, concerning the pervasive standards of due care and independence, are designed to inspire user confidence in the auditor and to clarify common misunderstandings. The third is intended to link the investigative function of the auditor with his opinion. The last, a description of the role of internal control as a basis for auditor reliance, is intended to further emphasize the selective nature of the auditor's investigation and to reinforce the implication that the auditor relies on persuasive evidence, as opposed to conclusive evidence, as a basis for his opinion. 4. The last paragraph explains the nature of the auditor's opinion while avoiding the use of the technical phrase "present fairly . . . in conformity with GAAP."

The proposed report is significantly longer than the existing report. As such, it represents a loosening of the constraint placed on the audit report by the profession's emphasis on conciseness. Such deemphasis is necessary if the report is to become an effective vehicle for improving users understanding of the audit function. Order No. 77-16,021, 284 pages.

THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNICATION AUDIT RELATED TO SELECTED SYSTEMS CONCEPTS

BARKER, Randolph Tinsley, Ph.D.
The Florida State University, 1976

Major Professor: Theodore Clevenger, Jr.

Organizational communicologists developed the communication audit to assist in increasing their understanding of organizational behavior. Audits are designed to determine how effectively communication activity is carried out within an organization. Perhaps the most promising base for audits is that of systems theory which enables investigators to observe the organization as dynamic.

The purpose of this study was to develop a systems based audit utilizing a selected set of Miller's (1965) systems concepts, current communication theory, and Greenbaum's (1974) work plan to appraise the overall communication system of a small rural industrial organization.

The investigator employed content analysis, interviews, and a questionnaire to gather the necessary information. The questionnaire was tested and retested with a sample of subjects from the organization (n = 34) using the Pearson r. Fifty-one questions were found to have reliability of .50. Factor analysis was applied to these questions and thirty-one displayed high and pure loadings on six factors. Those questions loading on factors met the following criteria: (1) the question had one and only one loading of .50 or above, (2) the question had a principal loading of .20 higher than any secondary loading, (3) if items loaded on many factors with high r levels causing "splits," these questions were eliminated, and (4) the questions conformed to semantic similarities.

Administration of the questionnaire to the remaining personnel was accomplished through a take-home procedure, with a return rate of 66% (n = 197).

Statistical tests used to examine the hypotheses and research questions, were: (1) ANOVA, (2) Tukey range test, and (3) stepwise multiple regression. The alpha level was set at .05.

Summary of Results

The content analysis of sampled documents indicated the plant was aware at least implicitly of important system (communication) variables.

The interviews revealed problems in transmission, feedback, and steady state. Generally the communication climate was good; however, results indicate particular subsystems needed further analysis.

The hypotheses tested in this study were derived from reliable and valid questions produced after appropriate analyses were conducted. Initially hypotheses were developed in terms of system's concepts; however, the factor structure produced, displayed a somewhat different representation. Those system concepts of openness and closedness, feedback, steady state, and transmission were found to have an interwoven design when observing the factor structure. Perhaps interrelationships are inherent in the concepts due to the very nature of systems theory. Other explanations of this factor structure was that the population under study viewed the observed factor relationships among questions as being more highly salient than systems concepts, or the questions themselves were such that interrelations were destined to be produced. The factor analysis produced six factors displaying characteristics of more than one system concept. The factors reflected the following categories: (1) empathic climate, (2) perceived freedom to talk about personal problems, (3) perceived barriers to information flow between subsystems, (4) perceived freedom of opinion exchange between subsystems, (5) perceived freedom and reliability of two-way communication with supervisor, and (6) information seeking.

Results of the hypothesis testing revealed significant differences between subsystems, however none between levels. Empathic climate and perceived freedom of opinion exchange were found to be significantly different between subsystems. In dealing with closely related subsystems significant differences were found between subsystems in perceived barriers to information flow and perceived freedom of opinion exchange with them.

The factors were unable to predict empathic climate with any reasonable margin of error; however, relationships did exist between factors (1), (2), (3), and (4).

The procedures, instruments, and systems perspective did yield important information about the company's communication. Relationships and problems between particular subsystems suggest possible disruption of company product manufacturing. Order No. 77-8567, 220 pages.

THE POLITICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA AND THE 1975 MINNESOTA STATE LEGISLATURE

BORGESTAD, James Thomas, Ph.D.
University of Minnesota, 1976

To a large extent, the success, and even the survival, of public higher educational institutions is determined by state legislatures. This fact of academic and legislative life becomes increasingly salient as interest groups compete for scarce state funds. University administrators find themselves queuing up alongside spokesmen for other public agencies to petition for essential appropriations. Generally, these academic officials are cognizant that the "politics of education" play a major role in determining the nature of the link between the campus and the capital.

What might be considered the most basic aspect in maintaining the economic and political lifeline between state governmental and higher educational bodies is the notion of communication, or as Robert L. Williams writes in The Preparation of Requests for Legislative Appropriations in Midwestern State Universities, "the question of effective communications." It is precisely this issue, "the question of effective communications" between the University of Minnesota and the 1975 Minnesota State Legislature that forms the background of this case study.

The central theme is divided into four related components, each of which is examined through the perspectives of two subject populations; one group is comprised of twenty-two Minnesota legislators and the other group consists of an equal number of University of Minnesota administrators. Attempts are undertaken via observational, survey, and interview methods to define 1) the extent to which formal testimony presented by University representatives affects the decisions of legislators on appropriations, 2) the characteristics of "effective" as opposed to "ineffective" presentations of testimony, 3) additional communication channels between higher educational institutions and legislative bodies, and 4) additional decision-making factors that affect higher educational appropriations. Out of these four central questions arise twenty-three hypotheses. Each hypothesis pertains directly to the outcome enjoyed by the University of Minnesota in 1975; yet, each is also generalizable, within certain parameters, to other states, to other post-secondary systems, and to other facets of "the politics of higher education."

Order No. 77-12,785, 350 pages.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION CONSULTING: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF CONSULTANT PRACTICES AND PRESCRIPTIONS

EICH, Ritch Kenneth, Ph.D.
The University of Michigan, 1977

Co-Chairmen: Herbert W. Hildebrandt, John E. Baird, Jr.

This study represents the first systematic attempt to explore the practice of organizational consulting, as engaged in by communication specialists. It seeks to discover how communication consulting is conducted as well as to identify and discuss consultant ethics, practices, problems, and experiences.

The data for this study were collected by the author by means of an eleven page thirty-three item questionnaire mailed to 350 members of the International Communication Association and the Academy of Management. The initial mailing occurred in October, 1976 and a follow-up to non-respondents was mailed in mid-November, 1976. A separate mail-back postcard was used to determine which members had sent in their questionnaires, thus preserving the anonymity of the responses. Twelve questionnaires were returned due to incorrect addresses, leaving a potential 338 respondents. From these 338 members a total of 281 completed questionnaires were received, providing the remarkably high mail questionnaire response rate of 83%. Additionally, ten nationally recognized communication consultants were selected to participate in interviews for in-depth probing and validation of data accumulated from the responses to the questionnaire.

For most of the tables in the study, the data for the experienced academic respondents are presented in four main subgroups as well as in an academic subtotal. These groups are: 1. Academic respondents with Long experience (6+ years) and Heavy current consulting activity (11+ days in the past year), abbreviated as ALH. 2. Academic respondents with Long experience but Light current consulting activity (1–10 days in the past year), abbreviated as ALL. 3. Academic respondents with Short experience (1-5 years) and Heavy consulting activity, abbreviated as ASH. 4. Academic respondents with Short experience and Light consulting activity, abbreviated as ASL. 5. The Total Academic respondents with Experience, abbreviated as TAE. 6. Nonacademic respondents with Experience, abbreviated as NE.

The study demonstrates that: 1) the practice of communication consulting is a young one, 2) the subject of ethics appears to be of major importance to communication consultants, 3) communication consultants favor the adoption of a code of ethics, 4) there is general consensus among communication consultants as to the need for putting consultant-client agreements in writing, 5) communication consultants have had little or no specific training for consulting, 6) communication consultants believe that training programs should be devised by combining supervised, practical organizational experience with classroom discussion, 7) communication consultants feel restricted by their institutional or departmental policy governing consulting, and 8) there is widespread interest among communication specialists, academic and nonacademic, in the practice of organizational consulting. Order No. 77-17,987, 166 pages.

COMMUNICATIONS DISTORTIONS IN A LARGE ORGANIZATION: AN APPLICATION OF THE DOUBLE-BIND HYPOTHESIS

McNITT, Francis Glenn, Ph.D.
The Pennsylvania State University, 1977

In order to increase the understanding and analysis of communications distortions and discrepancies within formal organizations, the "double-bind hypothesis," a concept initially conceived by Gregory Bateson to comprehend and provide therapy for schizophrenia, is introduced, theoretically adapted to formal organizations, and empirically tested in a non-academic office of a state university. It is proposed that studies of organizational communications must be emphasized once again in Public Administration so that analysis of policy implementation, agency accountability, and agency responsiveness may be better comprehended and, if necessary, reformed.

The double-bind hypothesis identifies communication disorders characterized by two contradictory injunctions which are conveyed simultaneously at two or more levels of discourse, each of which threatenes punishment for the failure to comply. The recipient of double-bind messages is unable to select a correct response, though he is required to act, since each option proposed to him contradicts the other and each injunction implies punishment for non-compliance. As a consequence, the message sender is never held responsible for failures in agency performance, and the message recipient is never able to comply with directives.

Therefore, the hypothesis provides a different explanation for non-compliance with orders and directives than those previously offered in organizational studies. Previous explanations of non-compliance emphasized: a) subordinates' lethargy, malingering, and subversion of organizational goals, b) competition and conflict among groups or departments within the organization, and c) the inevitable incongruency between abstract goals and concrete implementation. Prior communication studies' contribution to these explanations offered such variables as span of control, information overload, uncertainty absorption, and translations of technical into non-technical information.

By means of a questionnaire, respondents indicated the communications patterns operating within the office under study. The findings reveal that individuals experience two types of double-binds: 1) personal double-binds which result from the psychological and personality characteristics of individual members, and 2) positional double-binds which result primarily from the structural design of the organization. Differing patterns of message transmission and reception, differing perceptions of change-oriented messages, differing sources of important information, differing cognitive structures of the staff, and differing perceptions and attitudes concerning the requisite skills for superordinates are all affected by double-bind contexts. Moreover, the research indicates that those who are most diligent in performing their assignments are also the individuals most likely to be involved in double-bind situations.

The statistical findings of association between the double-bind and other variables are low in magnitude, and tests of significance are inappropriate. Therefore, definitive conclusions are rejected, and additional research is proposed before a final judgment regarding the utility of the double-bind hypothesis is determined. Order No. 77-23,257, 252 pages.

THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS IN WRITTEN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: A Study Of The Personality Characteristics Of Public Relations Letter Writers In The Finance Industry In Tulsa, Oklahoma

McROREY, Tom J., Ph.D.
The University of Oklahoma, 1977

Major Professor: Anthony S. Lis

The major purpose of this study was to determine whether writer personality or the degree of similarity between the personalities of a writer and a reader is related to the response of the reader of the written communication.

The writer sample used in this study consisted of fourteen public relations writers from the field of banking who composed a letter in response to a common problem, and the completed Form B of Cattell's 16 P.F. Questionnaire. The reader sample consisted of thirty members of civic clubs who evaluated the messages in terms of a semantic differential rating scale and then completed Form B of Cattell's 16 P.F. Questionnaire.

Writer/reader personality similarity coefficients were computed for the complete profile, the six anxiety factors, and the introversion-extroversion factors. A Spearman rank-difference correlation was computed for each writer comparing writer/reader similarities with reader semantic differential responses. Next, Pearson product-moment correlations were computed to compare individual writer personality factor scores with mean reader semantic differential responses. This treatment was repeated to compare writer personality factors to mean scores obtained on the three semantic differential dimensions: evaluation, potency, and activity.

From the findings, the researcher formed the following conclusions: 1. Personality similarity, whether determined by the total personality profile or on those factors which indicate introversion-extroversion or anxiety, is not a sufficient predictor of reader response. 2. Reader personality factors of high ego strength, premsia, and conservatism appeared to be significantly related to favorable reader response. 3. When writer personality factors were compared with each of the dimensions of the semantic differential scores, superego strength and threctia correlated significantly with the evaluation dimension scores and praxneria correlated significantly with potency dimension scores. 4. The two major second-order scores derivable from the 16 P.F. Questionnaire, anxiety and introversion-extroversion, appeared to be unrelated to reader response.

Order No. 77-21,390, 122 pages.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION VARIABLES IN A PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANY

RINGS, Robert Leon, Ph.D.
Ohio University, 1976

Director of Dissertation: Robert S. Goyer

This study's purpose is to explore the relationships between communicative aspects of the role-definition process and different types of role stress with regard to job satisfaction.

The basic question pursued in this study is: To what degree are communicative environmental and communicative behavioral conditions of work group members related to significant cognitive-emotional conditions of role ambiguity and conflict, job satisfaction, and the propensity to leave the organization?

Reports of previous research indicate that communicative and role variables have been studied separately. This study's survey questionnaire used the variable scales of Brayfield and Rothe (1951) regarding job satisfaction, Rogers (1973) concerning communicative environment and behaviors, and Johnson and Stinson (1974 and 1975) regarding the propensity to leave and role ambiguity and conflict. Demographic data collected encompassed sex, tenure, race, and education.

Pilot testing established that the reliability values (KR-20) of the variable scales ranged from .32 to .99. The survey for the main sample subsequently was administered to 108 randomly selected managers, supervisors, and nonsupervising management personnel within the General Office of a large utility. All departments were represented, including professional and nonprofessional personnel.

Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficients revealed significant relationships among the communicative environment and specific communicative behaviors by particular information sources (supervisors and subordinates and peers) and the role stress variables of role ambiguity (general task (SEE) of a respondent defined as the subjective evaluation of oneself in terms of one's goals in life. The socio-economic expectation variables used in this study were income expectation, job expectation and education expectation. These three variables were measured by the use of the Cantril's scale. The dependent variables were the mass media variables and these include radio listening, television viewing, listenership to radio programs, cinema attendance, newspaper and magazine reading.

We took a cluster sample of 300 male heads of households in Lagos, Nigeria, and had 231 successfully completed interviews with only 19 refusals. The rest were unattempted interviews due to student unrest in the city of Lagos during the interviewing phase of the study. The successfully completed interviews represented 77 per cent of the total even though this figure dropped a little after checks were made for inaccurately completed interview schedules.

The hypotheses tested were: 1) that Lagosians with higher income will tend to expose themselves more to the mass media compared to those with lower income; 2) that Lagosians with higher levels of education will tend to expose themselves more to the mass media than those with lower levels of education; 3) that Lagosians with higher income expectations will expose themselves more to the mass media compared to those with lower income expectation; 4) that Lagosians with higher job expectations will tend to expose themselves more to the mass media than those who possess lower job expectations; and 5) that Lagosians with higher levels of education expectation will tend to expose themselves more to the mass media than those with lower levels of education expectations.

The five hypotheses were upheld by a contingency analysis of our data. Using income and education as indicators of socio-economic status we found that income was a good and significant indicator of television viewing, newspaper and magazine reading when education was partialled out. We also found that education was a good and significant indicator of newspaper reading when income was in turn partialled out.

Similarly when we used income expectation, job expectation and education expectation as indicators of socio-economic expectations we found that only radio exposure was significantly related to the SEE variables when the traditional SES controls (income and education) were applied.

CONCLUSION

Access and exposure to the media of mass communication are associated with income and education. This simply means that people with the good jobs, reasonable income and education, will most often have access to the mass media and the information disseminated through them. Similarly, socio-economic expectations of an individual are closely related to his radio exposure habits.

In order to determine how to utilize radio more efficiently to redistribute information on issues of national importance (agricultural innovations, family planning practices and health education programs) further research is advocated on the siting of radio stations, use of local languages, use of local personalities and use of locally produced programs.

Order No. 77-6624, 227 pages.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS DESCRIBED BY THE SYSTEM-SEMANTICS METHODOLOGY

ROBINSON, William L., Ph.D.
University of Kansas, 1976

1. Statement of Purpose. Two purposes influenced the development, implementation, and conclusion of this study: 1) To employ and evaluate the system-semantics methodology in a descriptive research effort in an organizational setting, and 2) To implement a program of organizational communication research in the area of higher education, specifically that segment of higher education known as a university.

2. Procedure. Descriptive data related to perceptions of lines of communication within the University of Kansas were derived from administration of the system-semantics methodology. Two phases of the methodology (the Grapevine Profile and the System-semantics Profile) were utilized to obtain data from research samples drawn from the four principle segments of the University population: Student Sample (n=200), Faculty Sample (n=200), Classified Staff Sample (n=100), and Administrative Staff Sample (n=100).

The Grapevine Profile is designed to obtain participant reports from members of the organization regarding which lines of communication within the organization are given the most attention, and how those lines of communication are regarded. Telephone interviews were conducted to determine what was active in the informal rumor networks of the organization, and the nature of comments used to describe those identified elements.

The System-semantics Profile provides semantic differentiation data, along ten bipolar scales, of the affective meanings related to selected lines of communication. A system of stratified random distribution of semantic differential instruments was utilized to obtain data related to each selected line of communication from each sample group.

Analysis of data was completed using SPSS, version 5.02. Analyses included frequency of mention of lines of communication, delineation of descriptive "valences" related to each line of communication, comparison of affective meanings within and between samples for selected lines of communication, and discriminant analysis of the bipolar scales.

3. The Findings. Of 185 lines of communication identified by members of the four samples, twenty account for more than 50 percent of the total identifying comments. The twenty "primary" lines of communication are representative of the function and services of the university. Valences linked to the lines of communication are predominantly negative, with students providing the most negative descriptions. Faculty and administrative staff are generally neutral-to-negative in their assessments, and classified staff are only slightly more negative than neutral in their perceptions. No sample group reported positive perceptions of the communicative interaction within the university.

Semantic differential data show three bipolar scales emerging as endemic to positive perceptions: IMPORTANT, USEFUL, and RELIABLE. Three additional scales proved to be central to negative perceptions: SLOW, ARROGANT, and REMOTE. Differences were found among the samples on scalar discrimination and potency.

4. Conclusions. The system-semantics methodology of organizational communication research is a valuable and appropriate research tool for use in higher-education-as-organization investigations. A minimal number of changes or refinements are suggested for the methodology.

There is considerable value in measuring affective meanings related to lines of communication within an organization of higher education as a prelude to understanding the communicative interactions and dynamics which characterize the organization. The application of organizational communication theories and procedures to institutions of higher education is particularly worthwhile given the continuing demands of accountability and efficiency facing colleges and universities.

Order No. 77-16,302, 193 pages.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION TO AND FROM THE OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

SEEHAFER, Eugene Fred, Ph.D.
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1977

Supervisor: George Barnett

The objective of this thesis is a primary research investigation to determine facts on current organizational communication to and from American college/university presidents. Results suggest weekly communication patterns by 17 presidential communication topics, which may be considered a time allocation guide for current, present day presidential communication. Findings may be utilized by incumbent presidents, those seeking a college/university presidency, and to superiors, peers, associates and subordinates, who work closely with the president and wish to improve both presidential and total organizational communication.

Two basic theories are formulated, structural and environmental. Structural theory, the major concept, suggests that organizational communication changes with modifications in such typical organizational structure as public or private control, church affiliation or not, size, community college or larger, leadership, formal channels of communication, appointed authority and basic manager-subordinate patterns evident on organization charts. A secondary concept, environmental theory, suggests that organizational communication changes because of the given situation or emergency at the time--major, "crunching," and significant environmental influences that override other problems and command presidential attention.

The original 50-state sample of 916 presidents yielded 298 useable returns or 33% overall response. Six standard validity checks are employed. Three different tests are applied to various of the 24 hypotheses-- a test of confidence interval estimate, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient F-test and an estimate of proportions.

Clearly findings show that busy college/university presidents respond to questionnaires probing their communication patterns and that mailed questionnaires may be successfully employed for additional research. There is also evidence from the literature that personal observations of presidents in communication may be made in certain instances, further enhancing the opportunity for continued research in this major area of higher education organizational communication.

Results show all responding American presidents spend more time communicating on faculty and academic affairs than on any other single topic (7.2 hours/week) followed in order by business/financial management communication (5.8), fund raising (5.3), business-related external society (5.1) and student communication (4.4). Presidents spend the least time communicating on athletic, alumni and admissions matters (less than 1.5 hours/week). In general presidents spend slightly more time on internal (29 hours/week) than external communication (almost 27 hours/week). Presidents work long hours (mean of 60.5 hours/week) and spend the bulk of their time each week communicating on a total of 17 specific communication topics (55.9 hours/week). Two factor analyses suggest the original list of 17 variables might be reduced to 12.

Among interesting demographic analyses, results show presidents of private institutions spend most communication time on fund-raising topics (8.1 hours/week). Presidents of public institutions spend only 2.7 hours/week on fund-raising topics and the most time of all on faculty and academic affairs communication (8.1). The latter topic ranks second among presidents of private institutions (6.4). Other quantitative and qualitative analyses indicate presidents give top priority in communication to matters significant to their specific institution.

A major disappointment in this study is the inability to measure presidential listening/talking modes by communication topics. Another problem is the use of faculty and academic affairs as a single variable rather than as two different variables. Fund-raising aspects of political and civic leader communication also should have been isolated separately. It would have been helpful to have requested information on special on-going campus activities such as fund-raising, alumni, public relations and student activities taking place at the same time the questionnaire arrived on the president's desk, to suggest why certain differences in communication may result.

The null hypothesis of no difference is rejected for 13 of the 24 hypotheses, nine of 16 relating to structural theory and four of eight to environmental theory. Overall findings suggest the structural theory stands up well in this thesis but that there is somewhat less evidence to support the environmental theory.

Order No. 77-23,803, 236 pages.

ERROR ACCEPTABILITY IN WRITTEN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AS PERCEIVED BY BUSINESS EDUCATORS AND BY BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS

SIMPSON, Kawanna Jo, Ed.D.
University of Kentucky, 1976

Director: Dr. Vernon A. Musselman

There exists no recognized consensus of what businesspersons consider to be acceptable English usage and acceptable placement procedures in written business communication. Consequently, business educators have been in a quandry regarding objectives and standards for student performance. The purpose of this study, therefore, was threefold. First, the study determined the existing practices of business communicators. The study then examined the existing opinions and evaluative practices of business educators. And, finally, the study analyzed and compared the standards of error acceptability in written business communication as applied by university-level business educators to those applied by business communicators.

A sample of forty business communication teachers was randomly selected from the population of all business communication teachers in universities in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

A sample of forty business communicators was selected from the population of all businesspersons in Central Kentucky utilizing the services of a secretary, with the exceptions of those in the occupational areas of law and medicine.

An instrument was designed for the purpose of determining perceived acceptability of errors in written communication.

The instrument was administered to the business educators by mail, and to the business communicators by interview. Selected demographic data were also acquired from the business communicators.

A complete analysis of the total responses of the business communicators to the forty errors listed on the instrument showed that eight errors are considered mailable, 14 are considered mailable after correction, 17 are considered non-mailable, and one error is rated mailable after correction and non-mailable, equally. The errors rendering an item of correspondence non-mailable are:

Failure to spell out number when used at beginning of sentence
Transposed words
Addition or omission of word which changes meaning of sentence
Disagreement of subject and verb
Failure to double space between paragraphs
Left margin more than one inch smaller than right margin
Left margin more than one inch larger than right margin
Left margin uneven at other than paragraph indentions
Right margin uneven--more than one inch between longest and shortest lines
Signature line two spaces below complimentary close
Uneven paragraph indentions
Letter askew on page (going uphill or downhill)
Strikeover
Unattractive correction
Dirty type
Smudges
Handwritten correction

Chi-square analysis of the data revealed that no significant difference exists between the perceptions of business educators and those of business communicators with regard to error acceptability.

Chi-square analysis of the data collected from the business communicators revealed a significant difference between the responses of businesspersons with more than fourteen years of education and those of businesspersons with fourteen or less years of education.

A significant difference was also found to exist between the responses of businesswomen and those of businessmen with regard to the acceptability of errors in written communication.

The following conclusions were drawn from the data analysis: 1. Business educators are less inclined to allow errors to enter the mail than are business communicators. 2. Business educators perceive a greater percentage of errors in grammar and punctuation to be correctible than do business communicators. 3. While the accumulated data show that business communicators realize the importance of attractive placement and spacing in written communication, it appears that they are more likely to allow such errors to enter the mail than are business educators. 4. Business communicators are more likely to allow grammar and punctuation errors to be corrected as years of experience increase. 5. Businesspersons become more likely, with more education, to have errors corrected as opposed to mailing them or to having the item of correspondence redone completely. 6. Businesswomen have less tolerance for errors in written communication than do businessmen.

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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTS OF TRAINING IN LISTENING SKILLS ON ACHIEVEMENT IN, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD, A COLLEGE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSE

TERRY, Mollie Brown, Ph.D.
Georgia State University – School of Education, 1976

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine experimentally the effects of training in listening skills on achievement in, and attitudes toward, a college business communication course.

Methods and Procedure

The Campbell and Stanley Post-Test Only Control Group design was used in this study. A fixed effects profile analysis of variance design was used to analyze the cognitive data in this study for 63 college students enrolled in a business communication course. The Greenhouse-Geisser Univariate Conservative F Test was used for the repeated measures in this design. These students were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups by use of a random numbers table.

The experimental group received a planned program of training in listening skills for a ten-week period. One class period a week for 50 minutes was devoted to a certain phase of listening skills instruction. Dun and Bradstreet's Complete Course in Listening, an audio tape course developed by Dr. Ralph G. Nichols, was used.

The criterion measures used in this study, Achievement Test I, Achievement Test II, Achievement Retention Test, Job Sample I, Job Sample II, Job Sample III, and the attitudinal measure, were all pre-tested during the summer quarter of 1975 to obtain reliability estimates. The reliability estimates found were adequate.

Test I and Job Sample I were administered at the end of the fifth week of training. Test II and Job Sample II were administered at the end of the tenth week of training. The Retention Test and Job Sample III were administered approximately four weeks after Test II. All were administered in counter-balanced order to control for order effects.

Three raters rated the Job Samples independent of each other. A forced distribution of ratings with a normal distribution was specified.

Tukey's test and tests of simple main effects were used to look at the effects of the within subjects factor, test time.

Analysis of covariance, with pre-test scores as covariable, was used to analyze the bi-polar attitudinal measure. The pre-test of the attitudinal measure was administered on the first day of class and the post-test of the attitudinal measure was administered on the last day of class.

Results

An analysis of variance showed no significant differences in the groups on the between subjects factor (listening training). No significant differences were found on the within subjects factor, interaction of test time and treatment. The within subjects factor, test time, was significant at the .01 level. Tukey's test and tests of simple main effects were computed for each test to look at the significance found. The subjects in the experimental group had significantly higher scores on Test I. This result was attributed to the experimental treatment.

Job Samples I and II written by the experimental group were rated significantly higher than those written by the control group. This was not true for Job Sample III.

The training in listening skills had no significant effect on the attitudes of either group toward the business communication course.

Conclusions

Training in listening skills 1. did not make a significant difference in the attitudes of students toward a college business communication course. 2. did not significantly affect the retention of material learned in a college business communication course. 3. did make a temporarily significant, but not lasting, difference in the ratings received by students on Job Samples in a college business communication course. 4. did not make an overall significant difference in the test scores of students in a business communication course, even though significant differences were found for one of the cognitive measures (Test I).

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COMMUNICATION AND INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONS IN SOCIAL SERVICE SETTINGS

WIGAND, Rolf Theobald, Ph.D.
Michigan State University, 1976

Interorganizational communication relationships are explored in a systemic fashion and are viewed in the light of social service settings. Within an interorganizational system four interorganizational class variables are identified: communication, the environmental conditions, interdependence, and goal attainment. The first two variables are understood as exogenous to and the last two variables are viewed as endogenous to the interorganizational system, respectively. These variables' interdependencies are expressed in the form of propositions.

Based on this discussion, a preliminary path-analytic model is tested in a study of the interrelationships of sixty-nine social service agencies in the Lansing, Michigan, area. The endogenous variable goal attainment is the main dependent variable. The resulting analysis renders unsatisfactory results largely based on the low values for explained variance. This model suggests, however, several expansion possibilities for the basic path model.

The expanded model incorporates such variables as goal attainment, communication, centralization, organizational position, satisfaction, age, education, interdependence, cooperative-competitive environment, need for additional services, source variability of agency funds, budget, and others. Most path coefficients are statistically significant and the path-analytic model represents the best possible analysis of the data set. From this static analysis--since dynamic characteristics were not available via the data set at hand--a cybernetic model is developed that exemplified numerous dynamic relationships of interorganizational systems. This model demonstrates that it permits the extraction of implications that are not easily, if at all, obtained otherwise.

In conclusion, the results of the study suggest that further research should not be recommended. This study provides policymakers with information for directed distribution of social service funds as well as for the restructuring and organization of communication and coordination among social service agencies. Consolidation and application of current technology as well as relaxation, not in the service area but in the communication barriers dividing person from person, group from group, are recommended.

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